

# Austin Remembers...

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THE AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER ASSOCIATION  
WINTER ISSUE 2011

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## Mayors Shoot Straight at “Angelina”

by Beth Fowler

The *ANGELINA EBERLY LUNCHEON* takes aim to benefit the Austin History Center Association by recording not one, not two, but three former Austin Mayors as they discuss their mayoral experiences on Wednesday, February 2, 2011, at The Driskill.

Honored Mayors include Carole Keeton Strayhorn (1977-1983), Frank Cloud Cooksey (1985-1988) and Gustavo L. “Gus” Garcia (2001-2003). The honorees share a common goal: to present the significant events, challenges, and watershed moments they faced in office.

Charles Betts, Executive Director of the Downtown Austin Alliance will emcee the presentation. He will introduce and thank the Honored Mayor’s Table Sponsors: Nancy Bowman, Samsung Austin Semiconductor, and George Shelley. Additionally, he will thank the Table Sponsors: Advanced Micro Devices, Brown McCarroll LLC, Ann Dolce, Downtown Austin Alliance, The Driskill, Frost, Heritage Society of Austin, Evan Taniguchi, and Texas Gas Service.

What connects Austin Mayors to Angelina? Cannon fire, of course. In 1842, Eberly aimed at Republic of Texas Land Commissioner Thomas William “Peg Leg” Ward while Texas Rangers hauled away the government archives for delivery to Houston. Angelina’s shot warned Austinites who lit out on horseback and recaptured the archives. Hence, Austin remained the capital, and Ward was elected Mayor not once, not twice, but three times.

In case you missed the luncheon last year, it begins with a cozy coffee mixer for friends, history buffs, and city leaders to mingle and browse our new Waterloo Press publication *The Republic of Austin* by Dr. Jeffrey Kerr and illustrated by Ray Spivey. (We suggest daytime reading only to absorb the hair-raising true stories of early Austin Indian attacks).



Mayor Frank C. Cooksey  
1985-1988

After the mixer, lunch is a scrumptious delight prepared by The Driskill masters Executive Sous Chef Cody Vasek and Executive Pastry Chef Tony Sansalone. The entrée—thinly sliced smoked beef over a bed of Austin-area red endive, frisee, and mizuna greens—enhances the flavors of champagne tomatoes, chives, tarragon, and sprinkled truffle-onion vinaigrette. The most tantalizing dessert follows, an inspired variation on The Driskill’s *Historic 1886 Chocolate Cake*.

The upcoming Honored Mayors offer surefire informational entertainment, and space will be limited. So plan to save your seat.

Call the AHCA office for advance reservations, 974-7499, or send up a flare, a la Angelina.



Mayor Carole Keeton Strayhorn  
1977-1983



Mayor Gustavo L. “Gus” Garcia  
2001-2003

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*The mission of the Austin History Center Association is to help the community value our past and build a better future - by supporting the Austin History Center to achieve excellence in its efforts to serve as the collective memory of Austin and Travis County.*

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## A Message from the President

*Dale Flatt*

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to do five things.

First, I want to wish you, your family, and your friends a happy, healthy and prosperous 2011!

Second, I want to let you know that we learned right at this edition's publishing time that our organization's founder, Sue McBee, passed away in early January. Words cannot describe our gratitude to Sue McBee and the heroic role she played in helping the Austin History Center find its home. At last year's Eberly Luncheon,

former AHCA President and Councilmember Chris Riley reflected with anecdotes on Sue McBee's leadership, vision, and wit. In our spring newsletter, we will share a proper memorial and reflection on her inspiring community leadership on all of our behalf. We express our deepest condolences to the family.

Third, I want to invite you to purchase tickets for the 2011 Angelina Eberly Luncheon, benefiting Austin History Center Association. The event is Wednesday, February 2 at The Driskill. By now, you should have read the great cover story written by Board Member and Event Co-Chair Beth Fowler. We're going to hold the first in a series of three annual Eberly luncheons honoring our city's Mayors. First up for honors are Frank Cooksey, Carole Keeton Strayhorn, and Gus Garcia. We have an amazing group of sponsors, who are listed on the flap of this newsletter. Ticket information is available by calling 974-7499.

Fourth, I want to thank all of you who have ever been members of Austin History Center Association. Your annual memberships are our lifeblood, that allows us to support and promote the community jewel that is the Austin History Center.

Fifth, I want to invite anyone who is not currently an Association member to join or renew. We were founded in 1980 as a Guild to help save the beautiful building at the corner of 9th and Guadalupe that became and today lives as The Austin History Center. Now thirty years later, we are planning for the expansion of AHC to the Faulk Library building next door, when Austin opens its brand new library in the coming years.

The Association and its publishing arm Waterloo Press are alive with programs, books, archival acquisition support, and special events like the upcoming Eberly Luncheon. Please become a member, and join us in keeping the flame alive of Austin's hallowed and unique past. Membership information is found a few pages later in this newsletter, or call 974-7499.

# Blue Plate Special: Photos from the Diner Era

The Austin History Center recently opened *Blue Plate Special: Photos from the Diner Era*, a photo exhibit on display now through April 2011 in the David Earl Holt Reception Room. *Blue Plate Special* showcases how the American diner tradition manifested itself in Austin. The exhibit features photos of local diners such as Toonerville, the Night Hawk and the Tally-Ho restaurant, owned by the father of the late Austin musician, Rusty Wier. Ranging from the 1930s to the 1970s, the images recall the style of the period and conjure the feelings of nostalgia, comfort and community that diners have come to represent in our national culture.

Harry Akin opened the first diner in Austin, the Night Hawk, on the corner of Congress and Riverside in 1932. A night bird himself, Akin thought Austin needed a place that didn't close right after dinner. So he served late-night burgers out of an old fruit stand. Customers loved the extended hours. Despite serious damage from flooding in its early years, the business flourished. Over time, Akin expanded his business to include two other locations in Austin and one in San Antonio as well as a successful line of Night Hawk frozen dinners.

As times changed, so did diners. In the early 1960s, students from the University of Texas and Huston-Tillotson College staged a number of sit-ins at downtown diners and lunch counters. The *Blue Plate Special* exhibit includes images of two such sit-ins. Sit-ins effectively brought attention to the injustices of segregation and helped turn the tide of public opinion during the Civil Rights movement. Always a forward thinker, Harry Akin served black

people before any other restaurateur in Austin. In 1963, he was one of 100 businessmen from around the nation, and five from Texas, who attended the White House conference on the need for greater integration of facilities available to the public. Akin died in 1976, but the Night Hawk tradition lives on at the Frisco located on Burnet Road in North Austin.



PICA 28692 Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



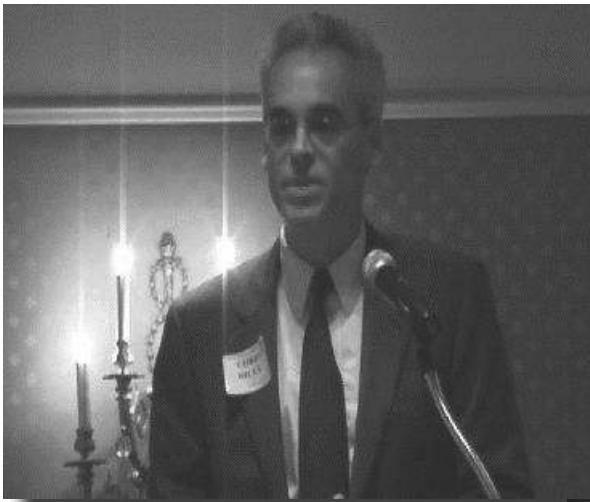
# Scenes from 2010



Austin Musician Guy Forsyth sings Depression-Era songs with the Sweet Home Baptist Church Choir



WPA Walking Tourgoers enjoy a modern Soup Kitchen lunch at Austin History Center



Chris Riley, Austin City Councilmember and former AHCA President reflects upon Sue McBee at the Eberly Luncheon last year.



Architect Emily Little leads a WPA buildings walking tour group last April (*below*)



AHCA Past Presidents were honored at the Eberly Luncheon last year. Pictured here are Whit Hanks, Chris Riley, Elizabeth Ann Gates, Sharmyn Lilly, Peter Maxson, John-Michael Cortez, and current AHCA President Dale Flatt



Phoebe Allen, the History Detective leads a WPA buildings walking tour group last April (*right*)

# 5X5Y

## 25 YEARS OF SXSW MUSIC

Every year in March, tens of thousands of people descend on Austin for the SXSW Music, Film, and Interactive festivals. Now in its 25<sup>th</sup> year, SXSW has become one of the premiere international conferences for the music, film and interactive media industries to showcase new talent and explore new technologies. But how did it all begin? Why did it begin? Who made (and still makes) SXSW happen every year? Answers to these questions, and more, can be found in an upcoming exhibit at the Austin History Center. *5X5Y: 25 Years of SXSW Music* offers a glimpse into the early years of the SXSW Music Festival, placing the festival in the context of the overall effort by Austin to position itself as the “Live Music Capital of the World.” *5X5Y: 25 Years of SXSW Music* will be on exhibit in the Grand Hallway and Lobby of the Austin History Center from February 16, 2011 to July 31, 2011.

The exhibit will officially open on Saturday, March 5, 2011 with the 5X5Y Fest at the Austin History Center, a chance for Austinites to get a taste of the excitement and energy generated by the conference,

which starts the following week. 5X5Y Fest begins at 4:30 p.m. with a panel discussion, moderated by noted author and journalist Joe Nick Patoski, featuring Roland Swenson and Louis Black, two of the founders of SXSW. At 6:00 p.m. a free concert begins on the front steps of the AHC. 9<sup>th</sup> street will be closed so that festival goers can use the street and Wooldridge Park to enjoy the music. The first band will be the under 18 award winning band *SCHMILLION*, followed by *WHY NOT SATELLITE*. All the members of *WHY NOT SATELLITE* played in the first SXSW Music Festival or played at the New Music Seminar in New York City, the event that inspired SXSW. After dark, join us for a free double feature movie presentation in the park, courtesy of the *Downtown Austin Alliance* and *Alamo Drafthouse*. The first film will be a short preview of an upcoming documentary on the 25 years of SXSW. The second feature film will be the premiere screening of the recently restored *Austin: The Friendly City*, a 1943 Chamber of Commerce film in the AHC’s film collection. There will be food vendors stationed along 9<sup>th</sup> street, and the event is free and open to the public.

# Ghosts of Judges' Hill

## Searching for the Bones of Ancestral Homes

Phoebe Allen, Austin's self-proclaimed "History Detective", fascinated local historians at the Austin History Center on Sunday, December 5, with revelations of Judge's Hill. The actual homes, both demolished and currently standing, and many of their owners were viewed in a comprehensive power point presentation.

Phoebe describes the process as follows:

Stroll back in time through one of Austin's earliest neighborhoods, using tools to unearth its phantoms and reveal stories of powerful residents who fashioned the foundations of our urban development and growth. Ghost Houses, now demolished, sheltered many forgotten but influential Austin families in the 19th and early 20th centuries -

Robertson, Townsend, Thomson, Chreisman, Blackburn, Brown, Hutchings, Walker, Glasscock, Bowers, House, Lucy, Vance, Caswell, Reed, Hamilton, Brady and Chiles. Excavation tools, many available in the Austin History Center, include Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, land grants, plat maps, deeds, lot registers, bird's eye view maps, city directories and historical photographs.

*Phoebe Allen, freelance writer, researches the history of houses and commercial buildings for nomination as historic landmarks. A 23 year veteran Montessori teacher, she served as chair of the national association of elementary Montessori teachers from 2005-2009.*



## Waterloo Press

Jeff Kerr's new book, *The Republic of Austin* (Waterloo Press, October 2010), is selling well indeed. About half of the first printing is gone! It can be found in stores around Austin, such as Book People, Breed's, Tarrytown Pharmacy, the state museums, even Sue Patrick's. And Dr. Kerr has become a very popular speaker for various organizations (he's the featured speaker at Westwood Country Club in January). We are thrilled with the response to this fine history of "small stories" of Austin in the 1830' and 1840's--our forebears were stalwart folk indeed! Check out the Waterloo Press website for some terrific holiday gifts.

# Become a Member

With your help, AHCA provides funding for AHC programs, publications, acquisitions, equipment and supplies, transcriptions of oral histories and professional training for AHC staff. AHCA is actively seeking new individual and business members. You can help by joining today! You can also share this newsletter with a friend or neighbor interested in preservation. For more information email us at *director@ahca.net*.

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## Austin History Center Association

P. O. Box 2287 Austin, Texas 78767-2287 974-7499 *Director@ahca.net*

### Membership Application

*Please mail this form with payment to AHCA*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (please check one) New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing Member \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to help with volunteer jobs in the office such as preparing mailers, promoting and selling Waterloo Press items, making phone calls for events, helping with general projects \_\_\_\_\_

If your employer (or, if retired, past employer) participates in an Employee Matching Funds program, please check here \_\_\_\_ Please forward the employer's form along with this one.

**If you join or renew at the levels of \$250 or above, you will receive a complimentary copy of *The Republic of Austin***

#### Membership Categories

*(please check one)*

- \_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$1,000 per year
- \_\_\_\_ Patron \$ 500 per year
- \_\_\_\_ Sustainer \$ 250 per year
- \_\_\_\_ Contributor \$ 100 per year
- \_\_\_\_ Friend \$ 50 per year
- \_\_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Payment Information

\_\_\_\_ Payment is enclosed  
*(check is made payable to: Austin History Center Association)*

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Amount to charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

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